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Workshops

The following is a short overview on some of the workshops we present. In addition to these workshops, we are happy to design in-company workshops according to your desired outcomes. Please ask for details.

Thinking Skills—ThoughtFormz - Switch on the massive brainpower already in your employ! All your people own a brain and nervous system that is the most complex self-organising system in the known universe. But how many know how to use it? ThoughtFormz has found a simple but profound way of teaching creative and critical thinking skills to anybody - from new entry matriculants to highly qualified upper management who are required to generate strategies and action goals More...

Creative conflict management - Rather than something to be feared, conflict is actually a vital energy that can be harnessed in all organizations to build more rewarding relationships and help organizational goals to be reached more quickly. More...

Transformational leadership and systems thinking - Systems Thinking is a way of seeing the 'big picture'. The 'big picture' comprises the interconnecting variables and dynamics that enable us to identify key elements that contribute to situations. More...

Aesthetics of personal & organisational transformation - Everybody talks change but few understand what has to be done to ensure that the process is successful and releases extraordinary levels of energy and creativity in a useful way. This workshop is all about how to move into your preferred future. More...

Decoding the technologies of influence & persuasion - In case you haven't noticed everyone is trying to influence someone to get them to do and believe something. Come and discover some very powerful technologies of the Attention Economy that can effortlessly change people's perceptions of reality, their values and their behaviours. More...

The 'how to' of scenario leadership - A forecast is no longer a reliable method of planning and strategy development. The ability of an organisation to survive and prosper in a rapidly changing, chaotic environment, increasingly depends on the skills of its leaders to enhance the capacity of their organisations to learn and adapt. More...

Change agent training - The creation of a change agent role is vitally important to facilitate on-going transformation in your organisation. We provide training, materials and on-going support and remediation for change agents. More....

Life skills - The life skills programmes developed by Eugenie and Steve Banhegyi form the national Grade5 curriculum for 2005 in all provinces in South Africa. Modules of this course called 'In The Zone' are available to be implemented in your own internal life skills programmes.

Throwing the bones – ThoughtFormz - superstition or sophisticated information technology? - A wealth of knowledge resources from Africa has been overlooked and colonial ideas have reduced many valuable information technologies like African divination systems to mere primitive superstition. It is, however possible to argue that African divination systems are actually sophisticated information technologies that are used to access, organize and visualise complex systems. More…

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ThoughtFormz - Switch on the massive brainpower already in your employ

All your people own a brain and nervous system that is the most complex self-organising system in the known universe. But how many know how to use it?

Thoughtformz has developed a simple but profound way of teaching creative and critical thinking skills to anybody - from new entry matriculants to highly qualified upper management who are required to generate strategies and action goals. The course is a distillation of the rich information generated by current neuroscience, psychology, experiments in learning and consciousness in combination with uncommon sense. Our purpose for developing this course was to:

- Generate prosperity in South Africa
- Increase South African organisations' ability to be globally competitive
- Facilitate confidence in delegating tasks
- Increase initiative and competence
- Fill in the gaps of former education methods that focused on memory and rote learning, ignoring the value of making new connections and applying knowledge in new ways
- Fast-track the talents of people from disadvantaged communities
- Put a stop to the legacy of disempowering propaganda
- Promote powerful democracy in the workplace
- Help everybody to see the Big Picture

Woody Allen called his brain his second most favourite organ. Now there is a fun and off-the-wall approach to learning more about the one thing we already work and play with 24 hours a day.

THOUGHTFORMZ—The art of engineering thought for the future

ThoughtFormz is a joint project of Steve Banhegyi and Associates and Andre Croucamp and Associates.

Thinking about thinking - a few thoughts on the biology of thought

This dynamic conversation facilitated by Thoughtformz focuses upon what Woody Allen called his second most favourite organ - the brain.

The human brain and nervous system is the most complex self-organising system in the known universe. Neuroscience has begun to explore the ways in which its relationship with the world gives rise to our experience of identity and reality.

> You are not flying the plane from the cockpit but from a flight simulator that could do with a serous upgrade.

Neuroscience faces us with many counterintuitive insights. One of the core insights Thoughtformz explores is: What you experience as your perception is actually a subjective internally generated model of what you think is going on.

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All our models of reality exist somewhere on a continuum between a useful model and a dysfunctional delusion. The main difference between a model and a delusion is that a model is always open to new information that may even contradict it and a delusion is not.

Do you want to maintain an unshakable and unquestionable delusion or do you really want to know what is going on? How can you refine your model making process so that your perception can move closer to understanding what is really going on? How do you access, represent, organise, use and evaluate the information your model is based on?

Thoughtformz argues that the main reason any organism requires information is to predict the future. Our ability to predict the future increases as we access more information, represent it with greater clarity, evaluate it critically and make creative associations between different bits of information generating useful patterns. These skills can all be learnt. If you accept reality testing, experiment and change as useful and healthy, you can develop useful models rather than delusions. This presentation is an introduction to:

- · the value of thinking about thinking (metacognition)
- · your perception as model making
- · the creative and critical thinking skills needed to refine your models
- · the role and limits of emotion in model making
- · the role and limits of language, metaphor and narrative in model making
- · the role and limits of rational thinking and logic in model making
- · the role of technology in model making
- · integrating creative and critical thinking into the workplace
- · predicting the future

This is a fun and off-the-wall approach to learning more about the one thing you already work and play with 24 hours a day.

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Creative Conflict Management - How to get what you want in the workplace

Most people shy away from conflict, let alone wishing to actively participate in it. But conflict, when approached creatively, can become an effective diagnostic tool to find out what is really going on in the organisation. Conflict contains the seeds to creating a more effective, stronger and whole organisation. Additionally, conflict normally masks some extraordinarily creative possibilities for personal and organisational transformation and change.

> ***"Conflict** itself is, of course, a sign of health as you would know if you ever met really apathetic people, really hopeless people, people who have given up hoping, striving, coping."*
> **Abraham Maslow**

Conflict manifests in many ways in an organization. At times it rises to the surface in the form of defensiveness, disagreements or uncooperative behaviour. Most of the time, however, it remains hidden and is evident from symptoms such as backstabbing, poor morale, high staff turnover, lack of enthusiasm, alternative forms of organisational communication embodied in “the grapevine” and frequent confrontation with unions.

This presentation will address important principles of conflict and will empower attendees to redefine what they understand about the reality of change. The journey will allow you to explore different frameworks and workable techniques accumulated across the ages so that you not only face, but are able to transform conflict with confidence in a way that strengthens relationships.

Come and discover for yourself:

> *"Have you learned lessons only of those who admired you, and were tender with you, and stood aside for you? Have you not learned great lessons from those who braced themselves against you, and disputed the passage with you?"*
> **Walt Whitman**

- A new way to understand the power of conflict and its potential for growth and change.
- Power, transformation and power balances in organisations
- Working with conflict scenarios – conceptualising the big picture.
- The aetiology of conflict.
- The creative use of appropriate emotion in conflict situations.
- Different approaches to solving conflict in the long term.
- Identifying core organisational metaphors and attitude towards conflict through the analysis of narrative, symbolic representation and behaviour.
- The power of scenario painting, simulation and game playing in managing conflict.
- How to change emotional relationships to people and problems.

- Getting to yes – a simple template for negotiating and creating desired collective futures.
- How the proactive generation of conflict can facilitate group cohesion
- Models and metaphors used to better conceive of conflict processes.
- Addressing the deep level symptoms of conflict.
- A multidisciplinary approach to conflict including ideas from Psychology, Anthropology and Sociology.
- Developing and implementing a blueprint for proactive personal and organisational conflict management .

Who should attend

Trade union representatives, organizational leadership, HR Management, spouses, negotiators, mediators, arbitrators, government officials, peacemakers.

Comments from past delegates

- A very informative and positive workshop
- I have already started practicing and coaching my team leaders
- Scientific and useful
- Was pleasantly surprised to be presented with the concept that conflict need not be feared, but can be harnessed to one's advantage
- Kept me riveted the whole way through

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Transformational Leadership and Systems Thinking

Systems Thinking is a way of seeing the 'big picture'. The 'big picture' comprises the interconnecting variables and dynamics that enable us to identify key elements that contribute to situations.

The experience of most organisations is that so-called "solutions" can often cause more problems than they solve. When a serious problem emerges, management often react by fire-fighting without addressing the cause. In other words, we only achieve short-term solutions. Unless we understand what actually caused the problem, it is going to recur with varying degrees of frequency and intensity.

Looking at the world from a systemic point of view helps uncover hidden causal relationships. The systemic worldview allows you to see the whole and not just the parts. Faced with a problematic event, we often look for the "part" that does not work. Systems Thinking encourages you to look at the whole, not just the parts. It assists in making assumptions visible and enables you to determine the underlying structure of dynamic you wish to learn about.

> It is change, continuing change, inevitable change, that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be. This, in turn, means that our statesmen, our businessmen, our every man must take on a science fiction way of thinking.**Isaac Asimov**

Systems Thinking - objectives

This workshop will enable you to:

- Understand complexity theory and how complex systems operate
- Discover systems structures behind problematic events and how they influence behaviour
- Implement sustainable and effective change processes
- Map key interdependencies in a system
- Develop leadership capacity
- Avoid merely treating the symptoms
- Identify the areas of greatest leverage
- Communicate about and learn from complexities, interdependencies and mental models in a common language
- Create an infrastructure to embed Systems Thinking in your organisation

> ***HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU NEED THIS?***
>
> ***Symptoms in organisation:***
>
> - ***Loose canons***
> - ***Too many fires to put out***
> - ***Inter-departmental strife***
> - ***Always looking for someone to blame***

Who should attend

This intensive workshop is designed for internal change agents, executives, line managers, strategy support staff and leaders.

Workshop Content

The Systems Thinking programme consists of theory and practical applications. We emphasise ways in which Systems Thinking techniques can be implemented in the attendees' workplace.

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Theory

- Concept and language of Systems Thinking
- Mental models
- Uncover, map & communicate structures
- Systemic interventions

Practical applications

- Create interventions in the workplace
- Develop a specific infrastructure for your organisation
- Improve key organisation processes
- Initiate and maintain systems conversations
- Embed Systems Thinking in the workplace
- Represent key dynamics in a sub-system diagrammatically

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Aesthetics of Personal & Organisational Transformation

A one-day experiential workshop for business leaders, seekers, teachers and managers.

Everybody talks change but few understand what has to be done to ensure that the process is successful and releases extraordinary levels of energy and creativity. This programme addresses important principles of change, using narrative, or story telling and metaphor, to empower group leaders to redefine what they understand about the reality of change processes.

The journey explores different ideas and workable techniques that were used throughout the ages so that participants not only face, but are able to transform themselves and those they influence with confidence.

The programme covers

- What transformation and change really is
- The role of narrative and metaphor in the creation of personal and collective experience and how to do it
- Identifying core organisational metaphors through narrative, writing the 'grand narrative'
- The physics, philosophy and spirituality of information processing, consciousness, change and transformation
- The human information processing system / the GUI illusion system as a metaphor for organisational, societal and computer-based information processing systems
- The mythology of transformation - heroes, metaphors, tricksters, alchemists, chaos and chance
- How continuous change, chaos, feedback and transformation can help you live a much more interesting personal and organisational life.
- The way different societies (Chinese, South American, African, European) have approached change and what tools are available to explore the change process
- The role of changing organisational narrative, metaphor, language, perception and attention to create a more useful reality
- The importance of ritual, drama, focus and intent in the change process.
- How to change personal and group mood states and why these are vital for creativity and openness to change
- Developing and implementing a blueprint for personal and organisational change

This presentation addresses important principles of change, narrative and metaphor and will empower attendees to redefine what they understand about the reality of change processes. The journey will allow you to explore different ideas and workable techniques accumulated across the ages so that you not only face, but are able to transform with confidence.

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Decoding the technologies of influence and persuasion

In case you haven't noticed everyone is trying to influence someone to get them to do and believe something. Come and discover some very powerful technologies of the Attention Economy that can effortlessly change people's perceptions of reality, their values and their behaviours.

If you are starting to become cynical and believe that you too, have been manipulated, come and listen to ideas that will enable you to turn the tables and hack your personal and collective reality. If you don't believe that you are dealing with the most loved bank, if you feel that CNN might have an underlying political agenda, if sheer driving pleasure makes you jaded, if you suspect that you might have been manipulated and you are not gonna take it anymore, this experience is for you.

The secrets of influence and persuasion are surprisingly simple. And whilst these strategies appear very obvious, they can consistently create magic in the hands of a dynamic creative like you. The ideas and techniques for this course come from widely differing areas such as:

- Communication and cybernetic theory
- Semiotics and linguistics
- Mythology
- Psychotherapy
- Neuroscience
- Mesmerism & Hypnotism
- Consumer Behaviour & Psychology

The material and thinking for this course is leading edge. However, it is presented in an accessible, actionable manner. And as you internalise this knowledge you'll be propelled to higher and higher levels of success and your personal horizons will be vastly expanded by the experience.

These techniques are being used continuously in advertising and in the news media. Now discover how you can turn the tables and use the techniques to have a more productive personal and family life. Create the reality **you** want for a change.

Come and discover for yourself:

- Modern models of human information processing, attention and selection
- How doublespeak and pseudologic are used to confound the listener and change values and beliefs.
- How to change values, beliefs and behaviours in a target audience
- How to address the unconscious mind via attention, metaphor, storytelling and the 'management' of perceptual cues
- Public speaking techniques of some famous politicians & religious leaders
- How to make your "suggestions" acted upon immediately

- Using the power of embedded commands in language
- How to make affirmations actually work for you
- Creating a collective mindset
- Techniques for marketplace manipulation / using fear and greed as your ally
- Manipulative strategies that naturally lend the power of logic to your presentation
- Powerful words, phrases, language patterns and narrative
- The technologies of interrogation and brainwashing
- Management of perceptual cues to create lasting impressions
- Techniques of Metathinking and metaprogramming used to change your emotional relationship to anything, including yourself

Who Should Attend

Advertisers, marketers, opinion leaders, change specialists, parents, copywriters, issue management specialists, communicators, spokespersons, broadcasters, journalists, teachers, intelligence professionals, art directors, traders, movie makers, public speakers, paranoids who feel that “something” is going on and who want proof, seducers and lizards.

Special rates and exclusions apply to politicians, ‘financial advisors’ and religious leaders

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The 'How To' of scenario leadership

What if…

Once upon a time companies could prepare a five-year marketing and advertising plans and strategies. Those days are long gone. Today, even a yearly forecast is no longer a reliable method of planning and strategy development. The ability of an organisation to survive and prosper in a rapidly changing, chaotic environment, increasingly depends on the skills of its leaders to enhance the capacity of their organisations to learn and adapt through considering various scenarios.

Scenario Thinking

Scenario Thinking is a technique that provides decision makers with the tools to identify and anticipate future-shaping factors. In contrast to forecasts, which only attempt to predict a single correct future, Scenario Thinking allows leaders to develop and consider a portfolio of several plausible futures.

The main purpose of good scenarios is not to predict the future accurately, but to enable an organisation and its leadership to learn, prepare for the future and to make better decisions today. This makes scenario development an ongoing process providing competitive advantages now and in the future.

Scenario-based Strategy

An organisation's strategy can now be tested for robustness within a number of plausible futures. Blind spots and incorrect assumptions can be reduced and new strategic options generated. For example: Does the current management development programme focus on the right knowledge and skills, considering all scenarios?

Scenario Thinking objectives

This workshop enables you to:

- Learn the basic scenario thinking techniques
- See the impact of structures on current events and then question assumptions
- Challenge the "official future" of the organisation
- Identify key concerns around current strategic thinking
- Develop a framework for the scenario-building process in your own organisation
- Gain hands-on experience in scenario building
- Use scenarios for generating and testing strategic options

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The Participants

This workshop is designed for senior executives, line managers, strategy support staff and internal change agents.

Workshop Content

The Scenario Thinking programme consists of theory, practical applications and preparation for embedding Scenario Thinking in the workplace.

Theory

- Scenario versus traditional thinking
- Framework of a typical scenario project
- Scenarios and organisational transformation
- The latest research on the impact of scenarios

Practical Applications

- Developing a business model for your organisation
- Shifting mental models in conversation
- Learning about the contextual environment
- Building an OD agenda
- Identifying key environmental driving forces
- Thinking systemically about the environment
- Crafting plausible and robust stories about the future
- Embedding Scenario Thinking in the workplace

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Change Agent Training

Our approach to change is based on systems theory and demands that leadership and management be aware of how the Knowledge Management (KM) system is used in the conscious and deliberate creation of organisational culture. Steve Banhegyi & Associates provides:

- design and implementation of the KM system
- assistance in the selection of employees for the change agent role
- training for the change agent role - it is important to underline that the organisation create its own name for this role.
- motivation following the workshops in the form of an on-going supportive knowledge stream that helps build skills.

The change agent to employee ratio should be between 7 and 9 people per 100 and they are drawn from throughout the enterprise. It might be particularly useful to include 'troublemakers' or 'leadership neutralisers' among the CAs. The role is voluntary and not remunerated. The role requires approximately 2-3 hours per week, some of which is via email. The amount of time dedicated to the role may change given various factors. We provide an activity template for the CAs in order to ensure on-going motivation.

Customised Change Agent workshops engage the following areas as part of a facilitated discussion:

- thinking skills (analytical and analogical thinking)
- the self – the nature of experience
- group dynamics / organisational dynamics
- leadership
- storytelling
- influence
- power
- interpersonal communication skills
- presentation skills
- emotional intelligence
- information theory
- game theory
- culture & change
- personal mission, vision and values
- the vision, mission, values, archetypes, roles, rituals, language, goals, rules of the organisation

The Change Agents' role

The Change Agents (CA) role is to spread the story about the changes that are and will be happening within the organisation. This role is a vital and complex one and enables leadership to efficiently, directly and reliably communicate with staff at all levels. Additionally, the CAs are able to gather useful feedback from throughout the organisation with a sense of authority. They are also in the position of being able to present this persuasively and effectively to leadership, peers and subordinates. The Change Agents role is to build motivation, acceptance, excitement and wholehearted engagement with the organisation's narrative. The change agents should be those individuals who are natural role models and opinion / thought leaders. They are selected because they are outgoing, popular, good storytellers and have the potential to become increasingly influential and intelligent (Doesn't everyone?).

The Utility of the CA role

The Change Agents allow leadership direct access into any part of the organisations and enable the generation of reliable, multisource information in a way that bypasses and transcends formal communication structures. It empowers the employees that are selected for this role and those under their influence.

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Throwing the bones: superstition or sophisticated information technology?

A wealth of knowledge resources from Africa has been overlooked. Colonial ideas have reduced many valuable information technologies like African divination systems to mere primitive superstition. ThoughtFormz facilitators, Steve Banhegyi and Andre Croucamp, argue that African divination systems are actually sophisticated information technologies that are used to access, organize and visualise complex systems.

Through a stimulating, interactive workshop they provide participants with firsthand experience of how techniques inspired by African divination can be an aid to critical and creative thinking and equip contemporary problem solvers to deal with information and knowledge in complex systems.

Through the random configuration of meaningful symbolic objects divination technologies initiate cognitive processes that access information, break limiting thought patterns and generate new ideas and associations that cannot be generated through 'serious' problem solving processes normally used in business.

Print media, which fixes black letters in a long line onto a white page communicates beliefs about absolute black and white truth or authority, linear cause and effect sequences of events that flow like a sentence, and the timelessness of printed knowledge. On the other hand, because divinatory technologies use the principle of randomness and engage the changing spatial relationships between objects, they encourage beliefs about impermanence, complex changing relationships and the non-linear nature of dynamic information networks. Contrary to popular conceptions of fortune telling, divination is based on the belief that the universe is not predictable, that there is a fundamental unknowability, but countless opportunities to participate in the creation of reality through the interpretation of random experience and the exploration of probability.

Through the use of randomness, divination accesses and organises hidden information that cannot be 'seen' through ordinary thinking.

Reflected in all techniques of divination is the principle that the real information you need to solve problems lies hidden in the network of relationships between the various people, objects and dynamics that comprise your life. This makes it a dynamic knowledge management tool. Because this information is not always obvious, but exists in the 'spaces between things', it requires some skill and clever technology to access it. Through the use of randomness, divination accesses and organises hidden information that cannot be 'seen' through ordinary thinking. This 'random access' provides an efficient coverage of non-conscious space unhindered by predictable habits and formulas.

- It encourages diversity as a way of increasing the possible responses to challenges.
- It values alternative perceptions, and opens the user to a constant process of redefining things.
- Existing perceptions are less dogmatic and people are facilitated to be less protective, defensive and possessive over ideas.
- It focuses on creative process rather than on the continued reproduction of preconceived product.

- It links ideas that are seemingly unrelated, arranging old variables in new and innovative ways.
- It potentiates breakthroughs and out-of-the-blue inspiration by allowing entirely new phenomena to arise out of the relationships between the old.

The success of this ThoughtFormz technique led to an invitation to create a participative educational installation at the Urban Futures Exhibition in 2000. It has been used in a variety of settings including scenario planning, innovation workshops, cultural diversity workshops, conflict management and workshops that explore possible futures. Ideally, half a day should be put aside for this exercise. It can be integrated into a full day workshop on creative thinking. During the workshop facilitators will use this technique to deal with challenges specific to your organization.